

a clue to the complicated geological structure of the Highlands.

What was the next succeeding formation that supervened on the top of the limestone series has not been discovered. We can hardly suppose that no representatives of the rest of the Silurian system, so thickly developed in the south of Scotland, were laid down. On the contrary, we may infer that the limestones were probably buried under deep accumulations of later sediments, though these cannot now be satisfactorily recognised, so great have been the geological changes of the region.

The geological structure of the west of Sutherland and Ross-shire has been the subject of a large amount of discussion among geologists. It would be foreign to my present object to enter into the historical aspects of this discussion. Reference however may be made to the views propounded by the late Sir Roderick Murchison, which in common with the great majority of geologists I adopted, and which were expounded in the first edition of this volume. According to these views, the fossiliferous strata of Durness and Eribol pass conformably under, and are succeeded by, a great succession of schists, which, in constantly repeated folds, constitute the greater part of the Highlands. The evidence of an unbroken sequence, from the base of the quartzites up into the overlying schists, seems in many places to be so unmistakable that the sections of the north-western counties were held to prove the whole of the crystalline schists of the Highlands to be demonstrably younger than the Silurian limestones of Durness.

This conclusion was at first accepted and afterwards denied by the late Professor Nicol of Aberdeen, who in his later papers contended that what were called by Murchison and his associates the younger schists were really the